



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis campaigns Friday morning at Frontier Bank in Rock Rapids. Running for the Republican presidential nomination in 2024, he said the party needs to move on from its past failures to defeat President Joe Biden. Photo by Elijah Helton

2024 CAUCUSES

DeSantis first to visit Lyon with campaign heating up

Looking to supplant Trump as GOP head

BY ELIJAH HELTON
EHELTON@NWESTIOWA.COM

ROCK RAPIDS—The heat inside the Frontier Bank base- ment matched the temperature outside Friday as a full house packed in to see the first 2024 Iowa Caucuses candidate to visit

Lyon County.

Ron DeSantis touted his record as governor of Florida and touched on policy specifics, although the main thrust of his Rock Rapids stump speech was straightforward: The Republican Party needs new leadership to beat President Joe Biden.

"If the election ends up being about what happened in the past, or if it ends up being about

personalities and other things like that, well then Biden is going to be able to sit in his basement again, not have to justify his record, and I think he's going to get away with it, and I think Republicans are going to lose," DeSantis said.

It's a thinly veiled attack on former President Donald Trump,

See **DESANTIS** on A5



Tim Baughman, an anti-pipeline landowner from Denison, speaks against the Summit Carbon Solutions proposal Tuesday morning in Fort Dodge. The city is hosting the Iowa Utilities Board hearing on the carbon dioxide project, a process set to go on for weeks. Photo by Elijah Helton

FORT DODGE—The Iowa Utilities Board opened its hearing on the Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline Tuesday, drawing fire from the proposal's opponents while supporters see security for ethanol producers.

Summit, an Ames-based offshoot of industry giant Summit Agricultural Group, wants to be the first company with a CO2 pipeline in Iowa.

The project would cover more than 700 miles and connect 13 ethanol plants in the Hawkeye State to its five-state route ending in North Dakota. Iowa accounts for more than one-third of the overall pipeline footprint.

The IUB will decide whether to grant Summit a permit after the hearing.

See **PIPELINE** on page A7



Sheldon High School student Noah Robinson meets with guidance counselor Shelby Bosma to go over his class schedule. Bosma says some students can be overwhelmed returning to academics after a relaxing summer. File photo

Start of school year can be stressful for students

Counselors offer advice on handling challenges

BY ALEISA SCHAT
ASCHAT@NWESTIOWA.COM

REGIONAL—N'West Iowa students grabbed their backpacks and set out for their first day of a new school year this week. Some students pedaled to elementary schools in 90-degree heat

while others hopped into cars with their learner's permits, headed for their first year of high school.

Whatever the combination of nerves and excitement experienced by the students, transitions are inherently stressful. Like any major transition, the back-to-school season has significant implications for students' mental

See **STRESS** on page A11



The Iowa Department of Transportation specifically engineered Orange City's roundabout to fit large trucks that use Highway 10. Photo by Mikaela Mackey

Area's first roundabout opens in Orange City

DOT designs city circle to accommodate trucks

BY MIKAELA MACKEY
MMACKEY@NWESTIOWA.COM

ORANGE CITY—Orange City is now home to the first roundabout in N'West Iowa.

Although there is some concern among residents about navigating the

new form of roadway, according to city administrator Earl Woudstra, a roundabout may be the safest route to go.

A roundabout is a circular intersection where traffic is permitted to flow in one direction around a central island and priority is given to traffic already in the circular junction. Oncoming vehicles are required to yield to traffic

See **ROUNDBOUT** on A10

SUMMIT HEARING FINALLY STARTS

INSIDE:

Church..... B3 People..... B4-5
Classifieds..... B5-8 Sports..... C1, C3-6, D1-5
Opinion..... A8-9 TV..... B9

WEEKEND WEATHER:

SATURDAY

HIGH: 74
LOW: 52

SUNDAY

HIGH: 78
LOW: 59

CHANCE OF PRECIP: 7%

CHANCE OF PRECIP: 20%

SHELDON, IOWA



\$1.75

E-mail us at: editor@
lowainformation.com
712-324-5347
www.nwestiowa.com
facebook.com/
nwestireview



Shining light on all cancers
Register by Sep 28 to guarantee a t-shirt!
bit.ly/glowthedistance23

Thursday,
October 19

GLOW THE DISTANCE

family-friendly 2-mile fun run/walk
benefitting the Hegg Health Center Foundation

NEWS

Anti-pipeliner 'afraid the fix is in' at IUB hearing

PIPELINE

Continued from page A1

The proceedings are expected to last several weeks, meeting on weekdays, although the timeline remains vague — one of numerous complaints from anti-pipeliner.

Hosting the hearing is the Cardiff Event Center in Fort Dodge. The IUB chose the venue as it is near the center point of the Iowa portion of Summit's route, which includes Lyon, Sioux and O'Brien counties and from there splits southbound and eastbound.

Three members comprise the unelected IUB. Gov. Kim Reynolds appointed all three members: Chairman Erik Helland, Sarah Martz and Joshua Byrnes. Helland described the proceedings as a court case, are the other board members.

"It is very much like a trial being held by a judge in district court, though there is no jury," Helland said.

But before the gavel fell that morning, the scene in Fort Dodge offered scant decorum.

Red

Eldon Hoekstra drove all the way from his home in Sheldon for this.

He owns a farm north of town operated by his son, Lance, and he's been against the pipelines since they were announced in mid-2021.

"I get wound up about it. I start aching," Hoekstra said.

And it is more than one pipeline. Hoekstra's property isn't in Summit's path, but like some of the other 150 or so anti-pipeliner at the hearing, he's on the route of Navigator CO2 Ventures.

Navigator has a similar project to Summit and will likewise need IUB approval eventually, however, the Texas-based company is further behind in its process.

The opposition movement, including Hoekstra, views Summit's hearing as setting a precedent for carbon dioxide pipelines in Iowa. While this isn't technically true — the IUB considers each project individually — try telling that to the folks holding protest signs.

"Once you let these people take this ground from you, the door is open to take it for any reason. From Day 1, it doesn't make sense," Hoekstra said.

About an hour before Tuesday's hearing, Hoekstra washed into the Sea of Red. It's a nickname anti-pipeliner give themselves while all wearing the same color.

The group stood behind Tim Baughman as he took the megaphone. A Denison resident, he also doesn't want Summit coming through his family's land.

"Our safety, our land, our lives and livelihoods are more important than Summit's private, for-profit bottom line. Despite Summit's immense pressure and bullying, we stand here united today to show that, together, we can and must stop the Summit pipeline," Baughman said, mostly toward TV cameras and other state-wide outlets.

Jess Mazour, an experienced anti-pipeline organizer working for the Sierra Club, faced the rowdy Sea of Red.

"We're going to keep standing up because there is too much on the line if we let these private companies come and take our land," Mazour said. "That is not right. That is not how we do it in Iowa, and it's not going to happen on our watch."

'Screwed'

"I feel it's a good word. Can you put that in the paper?" asked Kim Junker.

"Then, yeah, we're getting screwed." Junker and her husband, Ted, made the trip from New Hartford.

No signs are allowed inside the hearing. Attendees can't stand, except to go to the bathroom. Metal-detection wands and bag searches meet everyone entering the building. "Stonewalling" was the word multiple anti-pipeliner mumbled



The Iowa Utilities Board opens its hearing on the Summit Carbon Solutions CO2 pipeline Tuesday at the Cardiff Event Center in Fort Dodge. IUB members are Sarah Martz, Erik Helland and Joshua Byrnes, and they will decide whether to grant a permit for the carbon capture project. Photos by Elijah Helton

Tuesday as they took their seats in the back of the room.

While still outdoors, Rodney Mulvania said he thinks the whole process is unfair. He said there's too much money behind the project for the IUB to turn it down.

"I'm just afraid the fix is in. You know what I'm saying?" Mulvania said, rubbing his fingertips together.

Mulvania lives in Linn, a small town in central Missouri, but made the trip to Fort Dodge because the pipeline is planned to come through his family-owned land in Montgomery County.

"You have to work for what's right," he said.

There also was a water rule. No outside food or drink were allowed into the Cardiff Event Center. If members of the public had bottled water, they were told to dump it, and they could refill it at the restroom faucet.

IUB members did not have to abide by the rule. Helland was delivered coffee Wednesday morning and had a can of pop, too.

Mazour said the crackdown intensified later into the week when she still was there with about a dozen others.

For one thing, there was a bomb-sniffing dog at the security checkpoint starting Thursday, Mazour said. This is in addition to the metal detection and bag searches.

Another change was electronic devices. No phones, laptops or anything else was allowed inside, even to take notes. Mazour had to exit the building and go to her vehicle for any communications with landowners or anyone else.

"Security came up to me and said, 'Just so you know, the rules have changed. If people are going to complain, the IUB is going to run this like a courtroom,'" Mazour said.

Mazour said she and her colleagues were photographed by security as they left the venue Wednesday, adding to what she described as intimidation tactics.

IUB spokesperson Melissa Myers said the rules of conduct have not changed since the start of the hearing.

She could not confirm whether the photo incident occurred.

"Professional security personnel are undertaking activities consistent with their professional training," Myers said.

She added that the IUB did not specifically ask for a K-9 unit.

"The security staff includes local police officers, and if an officer works with a K-9 officer as part of their regular duties, that dog also will be on site," Myers said.

OverWatch Enterprises of Boerne, TX, is providing private security at the hearing. It did not comment by press time.

"Summit is using its power to

take away democracy and people's rights," Mazour said. "They are in collusion with the Iowa Utilities Board to do so."

Timing

Many landowners do not know what day they are testifying. Anti-pipeline lawyers such as Brian Jorde complained about the vague timeline.

"Obviously, everyone has witnesses and planning purposes and lives. It's kind of hard to have the room behind us here every day wondering when they might be able to testify and what that looks like," Jorde said.

He, along with the other lawyers and formal interveners, sit between the Sea of Red and the IUB.

Scheduling issues were identified long ahead of time by activists like Mazour. To her, it's part of a pattern of government bias in favor of Summit.

"This hearing is turning into a big slam on democracy. The rules are certainly not being applied the same," she said.

Some activists argued ahead of time that the IUB should delay the hearing. One big reason: North Dakota already said no.

The state's public service commission, similar to the IUB, turned down Summit's pipeline permit Aug. 4. The company has since altered its route and reapplied in North Dakota and has said it does not expect to delay construction past mid-2024.

Another wrinkle: The state-level hearing in South Dakota is scheduled to start Sept. 11, stretching out resources and expert witnesses.

The IUB kept its schedule and does not consider what happens outside Iowa's borders.

While an exact hearing schedule isn't set, there is a general order:

■ Affected landowner testimonies, also known as Exhibit H.

■ Formal arguments for and against the pipeline with expert witnesses.

■ Intervening landowners and other interest groups.

■ Summit's rebuttal to interveners.

Shane Neely is a landowner on the Summit route near Iowa Falls. Sitting in the front row of the Sea of Red, he said the timeline problems for testimonies and the hearing itself is an affront to citizens like him.

"It's all money-driven. The one that has the most money is going to win this case, money and time, and our time is worth nothing," Neely said. "We get paid nothing and these lawyers are getting paid thousands of dollars."

Kathy Stockdale is Neely's neighbor, both on the farm and in the Fort Dodge folding chairs. Her land has the cumbersome circumstance of being on the routes of Summit as well as Navigator.

She has gone through much anger

OUT OF ORDER

Most of the opening session of the Iowa Utilities Board hearing was dominated by bickering over process. Brian Jorde, a leading anti-pipeline lawyer, wasn't pleased.

"How am I supposed to prepare? We're just supposed to sit here for weeks on end waiting? It's crazy. That would never happen in a courthouse. Total nonsense," Jorde said.

"They're just kind of making it up as they go."

Jorde is with Domina Law Group, an Omaha, NE, firm with experience fighting major infrastructure projects.

Through the dense legalese, there were two main decisions made early on.

First, the IUB wants to minimize repetitious arguments.

The fix for this, Jorde said, is for Exhibit H landowners to talk specifically about their property. Exhibit H is the designation for unsigned property that could become subject to eminent domain.

Jorde plans to make the land the main character of testimony; where the drainage tile is buried, what the terraces are like, how a farming couple always planned to build their dream house on the exact spot the pipeline is supposed to come through.

Exhibit H's, almost 1,000 parcels in Iowa, could be subject to eminent domain if the IUB grants the project.

Bret Dublinske, who does most of the speaking for Summit's legal team, said he just wants everyone to play by the rules.

"There's a process here. We just ask that it be followed," Dublinske said.

WATCH LIVE

■ The Iowa Utilities Board hearing on the proposed Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline is being streamed on the IUB website at iowautilitiesboard.eduision.tv/LiveSched.aspx.

and frustration in the two years leading up to the IUB hearing. But once she was actually there, minutes before it started, she was more measured.

"I'm actually disappointed," Stockdale said. "Our government and elected officials, they are not supporting landowners' property rights."

Summit's side

Those sitting in the back of the room are a "vocal minority," according to Summit spokesperson Sabrina Zenor.

Seventy-three percent of the pipeline's Iowa route has been secured with easement deals with landowners.

"The majority of Iowans who are impacted by this, directly with the pipeline, want this on their property," Zenor said.

Broader public opinion polling has shown the opposite ratio. According to a March Des Moines Register/Mediacom Iowa Poll, more than three-fourths of Iowans are opposed to the CO2 pipelines, at least if they need eminent domain.

Zenor reiterated that people directly affected, the thousands of landowners along Summit's route, should be the main focus. The same pollster in 2021 found 85 percent of Iowans think ethanol is "critically important" or "fairly important" to the state's economy.

Striving for easements is still Summit's plan, Zenor said, even if the IUB allows the company to pursue eminent domain, which the board could OK after the hearing ends.

"Summit Carbon Solutions will continue to negotiate with landowners as the regulatory process continues to move forward and eminent domain is certainly a last resort," she said.

Zenor also pointed to the economic motives for the project in the first place.

The fuel market is surging toward greener energy. For ethanol to stay competitive in the long term, it has to cut down on greenhouse gases, but manufacturing biofuels burns a lot of CO2.

The solution could be carbon capture. That's the position of Gov. Kim Reynolds and many other Republican leaders.

While the scientific evidence for effective carbon capture remains debatable, its supporters say it would at least make ethanol more marketable.

Half the Iowa corn crop goes toward ethanol production. So, if farmers are going to have stability, they need these pipelines — at least in the eyes of the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association.

A study commissioned by the IRFA concluded that if Iowa skips carbon capture but other states allow it, the state could lose about three-fourths of its ethanol production by the end of the decade. That's \$10 billion a year.

IRFA executive director Monte Shaw was at Tuesday's hearing to support the pipeline. He said it's not about energy politics or anything else when it comes to ethanol plants staying afloat.

"As a business operation, they don't have the luxury of having an opinion on some of these larger existential political questions. They are simply trying to align their businesses to remain profitable," Shaw said.

He called opposing points of view as "legitimate" and said there is an approval hearing for a reason.

"I try very hard not to tell someone else what's in their best interest because I have a lot of people telling me how my ethanol plants should be running themselves," he said.

Shaw also lamented the IUB process has been so divisive.

"We believe that this is hugely important to the economic future of rural America, and we wish that people would work together to find an equitable path forward that protects property rights but also protects the right of this project to move forward," Shaw said.

To be continued

Mazour still had something to say on the bright side.

"Everything we're doing couldn't be better," she said. "The number of people showing up, the testimonies, the number of people who haven't signed easements — we're doing everything to make it easy for the Iowa Utilities Board to recognize this isn't good for Iowa."

When the IUB hearing went into recess for lunch Tuesday, it had only been in session a couple hours.

That was long enough for Stockdale's composed disappointment to unravel.

"I have to get out my angry face," she said. "I've never been treated with so much disrespect."

Like many protesters, Hoekstra did not stay for the first full week of the hearing, although he intends to follow closely. The Sea of Red provides solidarity, camaraderie and networking to stay informed.

"The better it gets, the more people hear about it and know what's going on," he said.

The Sheldon man was optimistic and in good spirits reflecting on his trip to Fort Dodge.

"It's great because we're right," Hoekstra said. "There's nothing in my life I've ever been more involved in."



The anti-pipeline Sea of Red mingles amid a break Tuesday during Iowa Utilities Board hearing on the Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline at the Cardiff Event Center in Fort Dodge. The group is opposed to the massive CO2 project proposed in the Hawkeye State and its members include a diverse range of personal interests and political views.